

Presented by the
B E L G R A V I A .

A Poem.

(Mrs. Gascogne)



London :

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HYDE PARK CORNER.

1851.

26. 11. 64.

THE HABITANT

BEATI QUI HABITANT URBES.



THE HABITANT OR THE CHIEFLY LIFE OF
HABITANTS OF CANADA

1881

ARGUMENT.

THE subject proposed—Belgravia's former condition—Its present state—To whom it owes its existence—An aged couple in Belgravia—A pious daughter who devotes her life to an invalid parent—A lady of fashion and her worldly daughters—Their superciliousness—and behaviour in London and country ball rooms—The superior courtesy and freedom from pride of the really high born—A vulgar couple raised to the Peerage by wealth—Ball at their house—Reflections.—A high-bred lady of fashion remarkable for her virtues—One who lives for fashion alone—A great statesman in Chesham Place—Tranquillity of England during the convulsions of the year 1848—The 10th of April, 1848—The Iron Duke—The Court—Its Illustrious Sovereign—Prince Albert, the projector of the Crystal Palace—Its probable effects on Belgravia—The charms of the Town—A summer's night—Reflections on death—Funerals of a pauper and of a wealthy worldling—A truly good man—A Belgravian lady mourning her only son—Death in humbler abodes—The shopman—Indifference with which the births, marriages and deaths are read in the newspapers—Remarks on marriage—Temper its chief bane—Enduring love—A Belgravian wedding—The bride—The ceremony—The wedding breakfast—Toasts—Departure of the bride and bridegroom—Belgravian gossip—Servants' hall festivities—The London footman—The lady's maid—Picture of an invalid lady's attached maid servant—The faults of servants chiefly arising from those of their masters—Christmas—Its festivities—Holydays—Mournful sounds that disturb its rejoicing—One who is gone home—A farewell

The opening year—Anxiety to let houses in London—The clergy as they used to be—Great laxity on all points—Reforms of “a certain party”—*Forms* unduly advocated—Discord and party spirit in Belgravia—Papal Aggression—England's reception of it—The town begins to fill—Diplomatic fêtes—Belgravia's surrounding neighbourhood—Belgrave Square Garden—Cattleugh's flower shop—The life of man—Its close—The Muse warned to close her labours also, and reminded of her inefficiency—Conclusion.

B E L G R A V I A.

I SING Belgravia!—that fair spot of ground
Where all that worldlings covet most—is found!
Of this stupendous town—this ‘mighty heart’
Of England’s frame—the *Fashionable* part!
Belgravia! Sure that name hath power to bring
Warmth to my strains, and aid me whilst I sing!
Belgravia! favoured spot, that dost combine
Beauties so far above all praise of mine!
Thou of the gleaming walls and lordly crest,
Oasis of the ‘Fashionable West!’
If such a theme should fail my Muse t’inspire,
Then can she boast no more her wonted fire,
No more attempt the song, nor strike th’ accustomed lyre! }

Time was, when here, where palaces now stand,
Where dwell at ease the magnates of the land,
A barren waste existed—fetid—damp,
Cheered by the ray of no enlivening lamp !
A marshy spot, where not one patch of green,
Nor stunted shrub—nor sickly flower was seen ;
But all things base,—the refuse of the town,
Loathsome and rank, in one foul mass were thrown ;
Breeding the vapours that in fever's hour
Lend to Disease its desolating power,
And quench the life of thousands—like the blight,
Noiseless, but sure, that in a single night
Upon the blossom's opening bloom descends,
And brooding rests, till all their promise ends.

It chanced that where the Howard's noble race*
For many a year had made their resting-place,
By a strange hearth I dwelt, in days of yore,
Not quite a bow-shot distant from their door.

* Halkin Street, Grosvenor Place.

And oft that silent unfrequented street
Has rung the echo of my childish feet,
As fearful, I approached the barrier, placed
To close the entrance to Belgravia's Waste.
Dreary indeed it seemed—and full of awe !
I saw not much—but quaked at what I saw !
Spirits of evil seemed to me to brood
O'er that forlorn, mysterious neighbourhood,
Prowling with stealthy, treacherous step around,
Or crouching on the damp, unwholesome ground,
Whilst sounds unearthly—voices strange and deep,
Fell on my ear, and often scared my sleep !

Such was Belgravia once—a waste unknown !

Behold that desert now—a gorgeous town !
On every side, before admiring eyes,
New squares appear—fresh palaces arise !
Where nameless heaps in rough confusion lay,
Now the clear street—the smooth and well-lit way !
Where hung pale mists that shunned the wholesome light,
Where lurked disease—a thousand hearths burn bright !
Where silence brooded like a guilty thing,
Sweet sounds are heard, melodious voices ring ;

And many a graceful form, and fairy face
Adorn this once obscure, neglected place.

And who so vast a work achieved ? What name
Shall fair Belgravia's sons transmit to fame ?
Who raised a town where once a marsh had been,
And fenced with palaces our noble Queen ?
Thine be the praise, O Cubitt !—thine the hand
That being gave, to what thy mind had planned !
That caused Belgravia from the dust to rise,
Thy might to prove—thy name t'immortalise !
A fairer wreath than Wren's, should crown thy brow—
He raised a dome—a town unrivalled *thou* !

And in the thousand homes that lie around,
Full many a scene of beauty may be found !
Lo ! by the cheerful light of evening fire,
Serene, though thoughtful, sits an aged Sire !
Not few his children—yet his fortunes small,
But care and patience shall suffice for all ;
And, whilst in stirring scenes *their* lot is cast,
He dwells in peace, and lives upon the past ;

Spending the gilded evening of his life
With her who blessed its morn—his faithful wife ;
And looking to its close, which soon must come,
As one, who journeying, sees his distant home ;
Yet still can linger on the pleasant way,
To pull the flowers, and catch the sun's last ray.

See where they sit—that fond devoted pair,
The fire-light shines upon their silver hair ;
And all the quiet room with fitful gleam,
Illumines brightly, like a poet's dream !
And as they talk of many a day gone by,
A tear-drop glistens in the old man's eye ;
And inwardly he breathes to Heaven a prayer
For all he loves—that he may meet them there.

But hark to footsteps !—voices sweet and clear !
They come, they come—the merry troop appear
And now they crowd around the grandsire's knee,
Making that quiet room alive with glee ;
And lisping forth their pleasure to be told,
The wondrous tale *their* sire oft heard of old—

Whilst feebly rising from her cushioned seat,
The kind old grandame seeks the treasured sweet ;
Tottering, half-bent with age—yet in her hand,
Clasping a little one that scarce can stand.
And next—behold the youthful sire appear,
The parents' eldest born !—His home is near !
And at the close of each eventful day,
He gladly comes, his debt of love to pay.
For he alone, of all their numerous band
Remains to cheer them !—In a foreign land
Honor and wealth his brothers must attain,
Ere they can hope to greet their sire again !

Yes !—'tis a scene of sweet domestic bliss !
But there are scenes more touching far than this—
A few doors off—in closely curtained room,
With light that makes more palpable the gloom,
Propped up in cushioned elbow-chair, is one
Whose powers of nerve and limb long since have gone.
Beside her, see her child ! in whose sweet face
Something far more than beauty we can trace,
A loveliness divine—a peace and joy,
Time cannot change, nor suffering destroy !

For she has learnt to fix her hopes above,
And though her path be rough—her life is *Love* !
That life for many a weary year hath been
The same dull round—the same unvarying scene !
To tend her mother ! . . . cheer her hours of pain—
To strive for ever—yet oft strive in vain !
The same untiring, gentle words to say,
Yet hear the self-same murmurs day by day ;
In soft low tones, the Sacred Book to read,
And learn from it to follow, not to lead !
Seldom to breathe the wholesome air of Heaven,
Save for short periods, with reluctance given—
In that dark room, to pass her life confined,
Free—but in one untroubled world—her mind !
Before a Higher Will, her own to bend,
And do it gladly—looking to *the end* !
To soothe—to suffer—and to pray unseen,
This her short story—this her life hath been !
And oh ! how glorious ! . . . What of warlike strife,
Or noble deed, can equal such a life ?
The sacrifice of self ! the constant fight
To overcome the wrong, and choose the right !

The earnest, glowing faith, that every hour
Sheds o'er her path its still encreasing power,
Making all trials light, and this world seem
But as a troubled, evanescent dream,
That soon shall end ; whilst on a brighter shore
She shall awake one day, to dream no more !

Ah ! still bear on, meek spirit ! Words were vain
To speak thy praise—to tell thy wond'rous gain !
A life of sorrow now—uncheered—unknown !
Hereafter, an immortal radiant crown !
A lowering sky—for one brief instant given,
To be succeeded by unfading Heaven !
More happy thou !—ah ! far more blest than those
Who, gay and prosp'rous—free from outward woes,
Their reckless path pursue, with giddy mirth,
Nor give one thought to Heaven—where all is joy on earth !

Behold a titled Mother—with her train
Of well-dressed Daughters—selfish, heartless, vain !
With dreams of rank and wealth their minds are filled,
And worldly wisdom—long ago instilled !
No wish have they on earth—no higher aim
Than to attain *position*, and *a name* !

An elder son ! A house in Belgrave Square,
A country seat—these form their utmost care—
No wish beyond—should Heaven so bless their share ! }
Cringing to those above them—coldly proud
To those a shade beneath—th' untitled crowd !
Their eyes survey them with a glance of stone,
That stamps them all unworthy to be known !
Or, if their dress they deign to scrutinize,
'Tis with a kind of insolent surprise,
That ought of taste or fashion should adorn
The forms of those whom *they* think fit to scorn !

And yet these worldly damsels—flippant—pert—
Though bent on elder sons—can stoop to flirt—
And worse than rude to women—yet can bend
To make some guardsman gay, their bosom friend !
Now watch them in the waltz's giddy maze,
Or dashing galop—'mid the glaring blaze
Of London ball rooms—striving hard to charm,
Embraced by some young lord's familiar arm !
Ah ! could some modern Venus prove their friend,
And to inflame the youth, her Cestus lend ;

What efforts would she save the heated fair,
What arts and what allurements might they spare !
Behold their panting forms, as on they rush,
Whilst graver, gentler fair ones gaze—and blush !
But what care they ? . . . so that enchanting whirl
Can but secure—a Viscount or an Earl ? . . .

But now—behold them at a crowded dance
In their own county—cold their haughty glance,
As gazing arrogantly round, they shew
There's not one being there, they care to know.
The Band is bad ! Light worse ! and, worse than all,
The Guests ! . . . What marvel ? . . . At a *country* ball ?
Many they shun ; and those that *will* be seen,
They sweeping pass, with high imperious mien
And saucy bow !—and should they condescend
To join the dancers with a *London* friend,
The ‘native herd’ they shirk ; nor deign so much
As e'en such wretches’ vulgar hands to touch.

Strange ! that the *really* great—the nobly born
Will oft far more their high estate adorn,

By courteous bearing, and a kindly tone,
Than those whose origin is scarcely known !
The princely Duke, whose ancestors have been
Princely for ages, wears a gentle mien ;
Forgets his rank—from that cold height descends,
And makes himself the equal of his friends :
Stoops not *their* birth nor ancestry to scan,
But walks before his God—an honest man !
Owning more true nobility in *worth*,
Than in the purest blood and noblest birth.
Not awe, nor mere respect, are *his* desire ;
Regard—affection—these he would inspire,
And these he hath—for who that knows his heart
Generous and kindly, can refuse a part
Of theirs, to one, who proves that he is great
In soul and life, far more than high estate !

Not so the upstart Pair, whom wealth untold
Has to the Peerage raised—base power of gold !
Strange ! but 'tis ever those of low degree
Who most insist upon their dignity !
They look around, and fain would seem to say,
“ Stand back, ye vulgar crowd, for us make way !”

With altered mien, they shun their old allies,
From low-born kindred, turn with chilling eyes;
Magnates alone they court, and titles prize! }
Thinking by sound and glitter, to delude
(Vain foolish souls!) the senseless multitude.
With true plebeian pride, their every word
Turns on "His Grace," or harps upon "My Lord!"
Baseborn themselves, their object seems to show
How many Peers and Peeresses they know;
And all who boast not rank, they view with scorn,
Owning no worth, save in the nobly born.
Well have they learnt the secret to be rude,
And taught their pampered menials to exclude
All but the Peerage from their worldly door,
Closed to the city friend, and kinsman poor!
Well can my lady practise, when she please
The fashion *not* to see, what best she sees!—
So good her sight—a glass she's forced to buy,
Not to assist—but to obstruct her eye,
And all who through that glass, her glance have met,
Know themselves banished from her lordly set!

A ball she gives—her splendid mansion opes,
And Royalty's proud presence crowns her hopes!

Dishes both rare and costly deck the board,
And wines that none but Crœsus could afford,
Charm and enliven many a poorer lord !

Her tables groan beneath the ponderous weight
Of épergnes, goblets, gold and silver plate !
Whilst through the rooms, gay crowds admiring press,
Old age, and youth, and blooming loveliness—

And nought is wanting to that glittering throng,
But now and then an *H*, which from the tongue
Of the fair hostess, comes not when it should,
And when it should not—scorns to be withheld,
Proving her lowly birth, and breeding rude.

Meantime, my lord, with vulgar, bloated face
Performs his part with even less of grace ;
No courteous dignity, nor ease hath he,
But strives to seem what he can never be,
A high-born magnate—like each guest, whom now
He greets with fawning smile and shuffling bow !
The rank of each, decides his tone and look,—
Mean to an Earl, but cringing to a Duke !

Purse-proud and fussy—chief he seeks display—
For all you see, he can afford to pay !
You praise his pictures ! . . Ah ! he'd scorn to boast,
But whispers loudly what each gem hath cost !
“ The merest trifles those !—my lady's whim ! ”
So *she* is pleased, the price is nought to him ?

Ah ! foolish pair !—think not your birth to hide
By mean subservience, and by monied pride !
The world ye court is hard, and will not give
E'en the reward for which ye toil and live !
The Great will seek you, and your feasts partake,
Whilst you the subject of their mirth they make !
And when your wealth for them, you've idly spent
On rank and fashion's vain distinctions bent,
Nought will you reap, but pangs and with'ring discontent. }
}

Yet near your door a beauteous lady dwells,
Who in all virtue, as in grace, excels—
Of noblest birth—and such patrician air,
That all may read her high extraction there !
Yet is she gentle, affable, and kind,
Of softest nature, and unworldly mind :

One who can keenly feel for all distress,
And with her purse, her pity gives no less !
Yet is not led by feeling's power, to throw
That gold away, nor shun the sight of woe !
One who in Fashion's circles holds her sway,
Nor scorns to mingle with the bright and gay,
Yet gives to higher things her *inmost* heart,
Seeking to choose and keep the ' better part !'
Fairest among the fair !—a vision bright
That dazzles, whilst it cheers th' admiring sight !—
Of glittering crowds—the brilliant cynosure,
Nor yet unconscious, though serene and pure !
With all that nameless grace—that higher tone,
Refinement gives to those it calls its own !—
Such is this lady—one who bears a name
In England's brightest annals—dear to fame !
And though that well-known name no longer awes,
Nor stirs to strife, nor gives to Europe laws,
Yet a still higher virtue doth it prove,
To softer passions every bosom move,
For all who know it—must revere and love ! }

And yet—within Belgravia's ample space,
Dwells a proud dame of less exalted race,
And far less beauteous!—but who once was fair,
And still may boast some trace of beauty's air!
Full of conceit, and arrogant pretence,
Devoid alike of feeling and of sense,
Her days in one continued whirl, she spends,
'Mid senseless pleasures, and with senseless friends!
Children hath she!—but never sought to teach
Those youthful minds, beyond earth's bounds to reach!
Talents—an easy carriage—smooth address,
A graceful wit—and sparkling cleverness—
These are her hopes for them—their utmost want,
Nor can she dream what Heaven could further grant!
All arts from her they learn—each winning grace!
She paints with power and cunning skill—her face!
Gives to her hair the Ethiopian dye,
And shades with henna's tinge each lustrous eye!
Eyes that can kindle with unearthly fire,
No generous deed of virtue could inspire,
Whene'er on rank and fashion's sons, they chance
To cast the spell of their transfixing glance,

But for the crowd, whom no such honors bless,
Can make that glance as cold and lustreless!—
Alas for these! . . . *Their* lot is to discern
The well-shaped back, and shoulders' graceful turn,
As with broad stare, and cool determined shove
Towards rank—like moths to flame—she 'gins to move,
Ignoring all, save those her cunning deems
Worthy her hollow smiles, and wily schemes.

But cease! ah! cease!—turn we to themes more grand!
Belgravia should a higher flight command!
And first—ere broader squares, and scenes more gay,
Or humbler Lares, claim my wandering lay,
To thee I'll tune my lyre, fair Chesham-place,
Where dwells the scion of a princely race!
One who may well his kindred's homage claim,
For whilst he adds fresh lustre to *their* name,
He for his own hath earned a never-dying fame! }

Well may he view with pride his past career—
His arduous life—nor envy prince nor peer!
Well may his country bow before that mind,
Born to control, and yet to serve mankind!

This age hath seen but two such!—one is gone!
And now the master-spirit reigns alone!

Ah! 'tis a high and glorious thing to be
As this man, great!—to rule the destiny
Of countless myriads, and that dazzling height
Attain by worth and merit—not by might!
True—such an eminence must needs expose
To many a fierce attack from angry foes,
And many a secret shaft!—but this man's heart
Burns with a flame that shrivels every dart
Of envious hatred—such a patriot fire,
As noble deeds of heroes might inspire
In elder days—when Rome's proud sons would vie
One with another, who for Rome should die!

Ah!—when we search through history's dark page,
And view the crimes and woes of every age,
Who would not turn to *this*, and pause awhile
To pray for blessings on our favoured isle?
Which late—when loud was heard the thundering roar
Of falling empires—some to rise no more,

When mighty sovereigns from their thrones were hurled,
And Anarchy her blood-red flag unfurled, }
Still calm remained—a lesson to the world !

True—some base souls there were—the Chartist band,
Who sought to raise a tumult through the land,
And for their own vile ends, and selfish good,
Strove hard to steep their native soil in blood ;
Freedom their motto !—desecrated word !—
Too oft employed with the unthinking herd,
To urge them on to all those thousand crimes,
That have disgraced our own, and other times.

Freedom ! . . . Britannia proved her Freedom then !
Uprose she in her strength ! Her warlike men,
And all who owned her name, made common cause
To guard their Sovereign and protect her laws !
Each stalwart Briton armed him for the strife,
His Queen and country dearer far than life,
And every palace gate, and pauper den,
Poured forth its crowd of bold determined men !*
There too—undaunted stood—as heretofore,
The Hero of a Hundred Fights, and more—

* The Tenth of April, 1848.

Still ready at his country's call, he came
To lend the aid of his exalted name !
With eagle eye, undimmed by time's decay,
He watched the progress of that dreaded day ;
Calmly his orders gave—each movement planned,
The sole director of that patriot band !
He knew the issue certain—for he knew
That England to herself would still prove true,
And but one object—but one hope had he—
To gain for her a bloodless victory !

Ah ! t'was a glorious—an entrancing sight—
Those tens of thousands—marshalled for the fight !
No age shall see—as none hath ever seen—
A prouder rally round a nobler Queen !
And short the struggle—long ere set of sun
The strife was ended, and the vict'ry won !
The hopes of those who longed for pow'r, were o'er,
And thus the Chartist fell—to rise no more !
Whilst their base Chief, by craven fears unmanned,
Fled from the ruin that himself had planned ;
And left to other times a dastard name,
Mean in itself—but deathless in its shame !

Such was the triumph wondering Europe saw
Achieved by Freedom, Loyalty, and Law !
Such the restless power of British *mind* !
Such the proud lesson, England gave mankind !
Ah ! be it ne'er forgot—but still may she
Turn to the Great First Cause that made her free !
The Mighty Lord—who in the dreariest hour
Of threatened turbulence, restrained its power,
And—whilst His wrath was poured o'er many a land—
Still smote not her—but stayed His chastening hand !

And long may England's Queen, who powerful sways
Her far-famed sceptre, dwell o'er those past days—
Those stirring times—and feel that not alone
Our homage—but our hearts are all her own !
Well may she claim them ! Gentle, wise, and good,
The snares of greatness she hath well withstood,
And from her youth, each act of hers hath been
Worthy so high a race—so great a Queen !
Bright as a Mother—perfect as a Wife—
No higher, holier pattern than her life !
Its hallowed influence all around her, spreads,
And virtue seems to follow where she treads !

What Courts were once, from History's page we see ;
But *she* hath shown us what a Court *can* be !
And how the magic of so pure a mind,
Can banish vice, and yet enchain mankind !
Born of a Royal Race, that knows not fear,
No evil yet hath marred her bright career !
And may she still be spared such—still abound
In joys herself, like those she spreads around !—
Blest by her subjects' love—that brightest gem
That can adorn a Sovereign's diadem—
Long may she flourish ! Long adorn her throne
With queenly grace, and virtues all her own,
Leaving to future times a shining page
To mark her reign—Britannia's *Golden Age* !

And he, who not the less our love should claim
For his own sake, as for that dearer name
That binds him to our Queen—my feeble verse
Would fain his virtuous gifts, like hers, rehearse !
Blest be the day when first he sought our shore !
White be its hallowed mark for evermore !
As erst old Rome, with Creta's milk-white stone
Marked prosperous days, and triumphs all her own !

In him indulgent Heaven hath well combined
A kindly nature, with a powerful mind—
One, which superior to the pomps of state,
Forswears ambition, yet is truly great !
Courteous in bearing, yet of princely mien,
A bright example his career hath been !
Nor envy's self, e'er breathed one slanderous word
Against his name—nor whispered that he erred !
Yet—where distress and misery abound—
Where help is needed—there that name is found ;
Where ignorance her stubborn form uprears,
And staggering vices follow, it appears ;
And every high attempt and noble cause,
Obtain at once his aid, and his applause.
With such a mind, that seeks at every turn
Some good to gain—some useful truth to learn,
What marvel that his soul should soar above
The petty objects common mortals love ?
And that to raise mankind to higher things
He deems an object well befitting kings ?—
See the vast wonder of the opening year !
The Crystal Palace—like a dream appear !

Recalling tales of old Arabian lore,
And Genii's power, we oft have read of yore !
Noble the structure !—nobler still the man
Who could give birth to so sublime a plan,
Which, when this teeming century is gone,
Shall make this year's remembrance stand alone !—
Well may the crowd their laboured produce bring—
On girded floors unrivalled trophies fling !
Well may admiring nations flock to view
What Science, Art, and Industry may do :
But to our Prince the praise—the scheme itself is due ! }

And yet, Belgravia ! much for thee I fear
The toil and turmoil of the opening year !
Unwonted sounds thy stillness shall invade,
And many a stranger seek thy welcome shade !
Around thy palaces whole hordes shall come,
And hundreds 'mid thy purlieus find a home ;
Till shy and fearful, the Belgravian fair
To tread thy streets alone, no more shall dare,
Nor home from neighbouring banquet glide at night,
Beshawled and veiled, with footman just in sight
Lest some rude stranger strike them with affright ! }

But me—nor doubts nor terrors shall restrain
From treading paths that oft I've trod—again !
At morn, or dewy eve my constant feet
In friendship's cause, shall seek one well-known street,
Whilst many a window wafts the breath of flow'rets sweet. }

Poets may sing the country's glowing charms,
Her calm delights—me, other beauty warms !—
The happiest hours my changeful life hath seen,
In London's clouded atmosphere, have been !
And what more peaceful—more serenely bright—
Than this vast city on a summer's night,
When silent watch the trembling moonbeams keep,
Above the haunts of mortals, and their sleep !
Lighting with tender and benignant ray,
Each humble roof, that scarce is seen by day ;
Whilst with a whispering sound, the soft breeze comes,
As though it wafted o'er unnumbered homes,
Blessings of peace and rest—and not a sound
Disturbs the exquisite repose around !

Perhaps afar, a feeble lamp emits
Uncertain gleams, where some lone watcher sits,

Soothing the weary hours—the painful flight
Of one, who may not see another night !
Ah solemn thought ! . . . A parting spirit near,
That ere to morrow's dawn, may not be here !
What are its hopes—its pangs in this dread hour—
When all that earth can give, has lost its power ?
And to the fluttering heart, and failing sense
One thing alone appears—*Omnipotence* !
Thrice happy he—who, hovering on life's verge,
A Saviour's merits—not his own—can urge ;
Can view with joy the pathway he hath trod,
And fearless, yield his spirit up to God !

Too little—'mid the busier scenes of life—
Its miry paths—its jostling—and its strife,
Do reckless crowds that dread event recall,
Which in an unknown hour, must come to all !
Yet in this teeming town, at every turn,
What sights and sounds of death, do we discern !
Lo ! here a band of mourners following slow
Some pauper coffin—weeping as they go !
With shreds of rusty black, from pity won,
Seeking to prove their fond respect for one,

Beloved, though poor—whose weary life is o'er,—
Whom want and hunger shall torment no more !
And there, too, see a gorgeous pageant come,
A rich man carried to his last long home !
With coaches, high plumed hearse, and well trained steeds—
A pomp the breathless corpse nor knows, nor needs !
Behold his kindred—servants—and his heir !
Striving to *look* the mourning that they wear !
The first—with half-drawn blinds, and solemn mien,
Conversing low on what his life hath been,
Whom he hath failed to mention in his Will,
And how the youthful heir his place shall fill—
Whilst in the splendid home that he hath left,
One weeping sits—who is indeed bereft—
One who has nursed him in his slow decay,
And borne her part unmurmuring, day by day,
But now must seek a humbler roof, and strive
On scantiest pittance—as she may—to live !

But pause awhile !—When that harsh Dives fled,
One scarce less rich, was numbered with the dead !
A man, whose aid was never sought in vain,
Whose like we may not hope to see again !

Whose glorious aims, and pure enlightened mind,
And lofty deeds—might well instruct mankind !

Not his the warrior's Fame ! No laurelled wreath
For dauntless valor, or a hero's death—
Adorned his brow!—His heart—his life—were *Peace*,
His prayer, that strife, and all its woes might cease !
The Christian's warfare his!—more glorious far
Than all the ' pomp and circumstance of war !'
In heart a simplest child—in mind a man,
Noble and spotless as the race he ran !
The fondest father, ever children blest—
The tenderest husband, doating wife possessed !
To them his heart and purse he opened wide,
Nor ever caused one pang—until he died !—
To feed the hungry—clothe the naked—seek
The wrong to punish—and protect the weak !
To stand unshrinking forth, in *Freedom's* cause,
Nor heed the taunts of men, nor their applause !
To seek—not party's—but his country's good,
Too oft forgot—too seldom understood !—
To aid with heart and voice, all pure reform,
Yet shrink from zeal that would produce a storm !

Wealth to acquire—yet free from pride of pelf,
To spend for others—rarely for himself !
To plead the cause of many an infant band,
And spread instruction's blessings through the land;
To look on life with calm, contented mind,
A foe to none—the friend of all mankind ;
To judge their errors with enlightened sense,
Yet cast o'er all, his own benevolence !
To strive unmoved, through good report and ill,
His God to serve—his duty to fulfil ;
And whilst his feet the 'narrow pathway' pressed,
To hope—(through Christ) for Heaven's eternal rest—
These were his aims—and though his honored name
Unsung—unstoried—be unknown to fame,
Yet shall the record of those virtues rise,
A far more glorious incense to the skies,
Whilst in the hearts of those who knew him best,
Deathless and sacred, shall his memory rest !

Now view that tall Belgravian mansion near,
Where mourns a mother by her infant's bier !
See the dark shutters that exclude the light,
As though to hide her agony from sight !

By the lone crib she sits—that weary one !
Watching his little corpse—her only son !—
Heir to a noble name, and countless wealth,
And every blessing heart could wish, save health ;
Her hope in widowed hours—her latest joy—
Heaven in its secret wisdom, took the boy !
She watched him go—she saw relentless death
Slowly approach, and steal his infant breath !
No struggle there !—he gazed on her, and smiled,
As though to bid her ne'er forget her child !
Then bowed his head—she caught his last low moan,
And closed his eyes—her beautiful ! her own !—
And precious now to her, each passing day,
Whilst yet she gazes on his senseless clay !
Too soon, e'en that sad solace shall be gone,
The silent tomb shall claim her little one,
And funeral pomps he used to watch with dread
In living hours—shall honor him when dead !

Ah ! how unlike the rights in ancient days
They paid the young—our gloomier custom pays !
Nor pompous hearse—nor plumes—nor hireling mute
Attended *them*—but sweetest tones of flute

In soft and tender accents, would bewail
Beings so fondly cherished—yet so frail !

But not alone in proud Belgravian homes
Does death appear !—Lo ! *every where* it comes !
The darkened window in the noisy mews,
To awe-struck eyes—its dreaded presence shews !
The humble shop, where runs the slip-shod maid
With empty plate—and pauses—all afraid,
To mark the half-closed shutters,—proof that one
Who served her late, and gossipped oft, is gone—
There too it rests—but not the cherished dead
Must keep the living from their daily bread !
The poor man weeps—but he must toil and strive,
Nor yield to idle grief—for *he* must *live* !
Thus,—though above in death the mother sleep,
And round her coffin wondering children weep,
Below—Jane finds her needs as usual, served—
Nor seems the shopman trembling, nor unnerved,
But tells with quiet grief, and serious face,
She's gone—he trusts to a far better place,
For hard and painful was her toilsome life,
An anxious mother, and devoted wife !

And now her orphans claim his utmost pains,
And he must work for them whilst life remains !
Thus speaking—still he serves the waiting few,
Some poor like him—perhaps some mourning too !
And so his hard day passes—till at eve
Worn out and wearied, he has time to grieve !
Then comes the poor man's welcome blessing—sleep—
And he reposes, when the Rich would—weep !

Ah ! when by cheerful hearth the news we read,—
The mighty Times—which with resistless speed,
Throughout the bounds of Man's far rule, is spread—
When swift we search each column for the place
That tells of those grand epochs of our race,
Birth !—Marriage !—Death !—the all important three,
That have been through all time, and still shall be !
Too little think we of the deep distress,
Or heartfelt joy, each sentence *may* express !
Thus when we read—‘The Lady such an one,
In Grosvenor Crescent, of a still-born son !’—
We dream not half her anguish—her despair,
At losing thus the precious, wished-for heir !
Again—‘The lady of John Sprout, of twins !’

We think not how poor Sprout bewails his sins,
His adverse fate—his heap of hungry sons,
His slender income—and inveterate duns,—
Nor how he envies Roman sires of yore,
Whose new-born babes were laid upon the floor,
That they might choose—and choosing, bend and raise
Those they designed to own in future days !
Ah ! were it thus—not Sprout would condescend,
But rest his weary back—and—*never* bend !

But next comes marriage !—mine of joy or woe,
The highest point of either, man can know !
Well might the God of Love be painted blind,
Veiled are *his* eyes, and blinding half mankind !
Yet beauty—fortune—talents rare—and rank,
All may in one combine—yet prove—a blank !
Like Solon, none to boast of bliss may dare,
Till they have seen the end—and found it *there* !*What troops of friends—what prospects bright and gay—
What hopes have smiled on many a marriage-day !

* Croesus, in his prosperity, observing one day to Solon upon the greatness of his happiness—“No one,” replied the Philosopher, “may venture to pronounce himself happy, until he sees what his end will be.”

The first, perchance, of a discordant life,
And ceaseless quarrels, betwixt man and wife,
Till they, who once were lovers, find *their* end
(Each to the other deigning not to bend)
Is—to be worse than stranger—less than friend !

Ah ! fertile source of misery and strife—
Temper ! Thou fearful bane of wedded life !
Who that could know thy subtle power, would dare
To run the risk of Marriage, and—Despair !
The angry eye—the cold averted look,
The sharp retort, not Job himself could brook ;
The bitter taunt, in civil language dressed,
The cutting satire, guardedly expressed,
The sullen silence—worse than all the rest—
These are thine aids, and these thy victims sting,
Till Life itself becomes an odious thing,
And to the hope of Death, as to release, they cling.

And many a case we see, where adverse Fate
Has joined a couple, never meant to mate !
Each with no small amount of good, yet still,
Each with a different mind, and stubborn will.

What discord then succeeds—what endless war !
Yet marvel we such worthy souls should jar !
No need of wonder ! None but they can know,
Where the shoe pinches the rebellious toe !
And though to us, who judge by outward sight,
That shoe appear well-polished, clear, and bright,
Of graceful form, and not a whit too small,
Yet *they* will hate it, if it pinch at all !*

But some there are—ah ! blest indeed, above
The common lot, who *never* cease to love !
Who own one home—one heart—as well as name,
The same in temper—as in mind the same—
Who, when the years are past of mutual fire †
A holier passion—deeper love inspire—
A love, that in distress the brighter glows—
That naught of change, save by encreasing, knows—
That shed through life—illuminates its close ! }
}

* One of the ancients, wishing to put away his wife, his friends remonstrated with him, urging that she was beautiful, well-made, and possessed of every desirable quality. “ See !—” said he, taking off his shoe,—“ Is not this a handsome, well-made, and well-proportioned article ?—yet who but myself can tell in what particular part it pinches me ! ”

† The Ancients called a Lover the Fire of his Mistress, and a Mistress, her Lover’s Fire.

But turn we to the Morning Post,—for there
Appear the names of a Belgravian pair,
Whom yester-morn saw joined—a touching sight—
So youthful they—so joyous—and so bright !
She—the fair daughter of a noble race,
Famed for their goodness, truth, and courteous grace ;
With tenderest caution nurtured—free from aught
Of pedant pride—and yet well read—well taught !
Whose ears no school-girl gossip e'er defiled,
Guileless as Eve, when first on Man she smiled—
The gentlest, yet the sprightliest soul on earth,
Who never grieved her parents from her birth,
But blessed with smiles and glee their bright Belgravian }
hearth !

Behold her blushing like an opening rose,
That half its beauties doth not yet disclose !
Her light veil floating round her—whilst beneath
Is seen the mystic crown—the bridal wreath,
Decking with modest grace her virgin brow,
That never looked so beautiful as now !

She comes—reclining on her father's arm,
Half joy and tender love—and half alarm !
The mother follows—glad, but full of care,
And silent breathing many an earnest prayer,
Whilst youthful forms cling shyly to her side,
Varying, yet beauteous, as the sister bride !

But hush ! the church is entered—not a word
Disturbs the breathless silence—till are heard
Solemn and clear, those sentences sublime,
That join the fates of mortals through all time !
Ah ! beautiful are they !—and never yet
Mine ears have heard them, but mine eyes were wet !
Never may those, they bind together now,
Shake off those fetters—break that awful vow !
Never to either, can again be said
Those words—till one has passed the portal dread, }
Thathides from longing eyes, the lost and cherished dead ! }

The solemn rite is ended—and the bride
Clings with a bashful yearning to *his* side,
Who now must lead ;—whose manly heart beats high,
With love and rapture at the new-formed tie

And round the pair, rejoicing kindred press,
Speak the fond wish—repeat the warm caress,
Till all retire—and gaping crowds without,
Proclaim each fresh departure, with a shout,
As off they drive at blithesome, rattling pace,
Rejoicing in the free Belgravian space—
Bright contrast to the narrow bound before
That far-famed spot—St. George's Vestry door !

And now the nuptial feast in Belgrave Square
Goes bravely on—and all Belgravia there !
And smiling faces crown the festive board,
Where sits the bride beside her youthful lord !—
But why those tears upon her blushing cheek ?
Ah ! she hath heard her honored father speak !
And at the sound of that calm, well-known voice,
Bidding her lover take her, and rejoice—
And blessing him—the husband of her choice—
Her heart hath melted ;—and fond thoughts of home,
And early, pleasant days, have o'er her come,
Till she hath wept, to think her place no more,
Shall be beside th' accustomed hearth of yore !

}

But hark ! another toast ! an eager pause—
And then a speech ! and rapturous applause—
And whilst the speaker seeks what next to say,
Unseen she rises—quiet steals away,
And leaving all that mirthful crowd below,
With tearful haste, arrays herself to go.

Then comes the dark-grey chariot dashing round,
And eager coursers prancing, stamp the ground !
Without the door, fresh crowds expectant throng,
And murmur—now she cannot tarry long !
Whilst stern police—with shove and thrust aside,
Keep clear in front, a passage for the bride !
Above—upon the balcony's gay height,
Mingle creation's lords—and ladies bright,
And all around the space of Belgrave Square,
Is one vast sea of faces—met—to stare !

Why comes she not ?—Alas ! she lingers yet,
And gazes round, with many a soft regret !
Her little sisters, weeping, near her press,
Nor can she view unmoved their fond distress !

But now her mother strains her to her heart,
And bids her with a faltering voice depart !
Her father's tender blessing next, she hears,
And vainly strives to check her blinding tears !
But now once more, his arm its aid affords,
Once more she listens to his tender words,
And then he brings her forth—and deafening cheers
Greet her fair form, as trembling she appears !
The youthful bridegroom follows—then they raise
Once more for him, the note of vulgar praise,
The distant crowd takes up th' infectious sound,
And cheers and shouts reverberate around,
Till each postillion spurs his wondering steed,
And off at last they whirl, at headlong speed !

Then soon subsides without—the noisy din,
And silence swift succeeds to that within !
The unwashed herd disperse to toil—or shirk
In tippling ale-house, the detested work !
The guests depart—to trifle through the day
With visit, drive, or gossip, as they may !
Recount to curious ears the morning's tale,
How fair the Bride—how exquisite her veil !

“ The breakfast Gunter’s—admirably done !
“ But that of course ! And then—an only son !
“ Quite an Adonis—and his uncle’s heir !
“ A place in Wales—a house in Belgrave Square !
“ Diamonds declared to be a mine of wealth—
“ His uncle too—in most precarious health !
“ Such plate ! ’tis said ! . . . A service all in gold—
“ And he can’t last—he’s gouty, and he’s old !
“ One hopes at least—that since she’s made the catch,
“ She feels the value of so vast a match !”

Whilst thus they talk, their hosts are left alone
To feel with grief their child is *really* gone !
Not dreams of vain ambition, wealth, nor pride
Inflate *their* hearts, for her, that simple bride !
Unworldly they—and though their souls rejoice
To think how *good*, the object of her choice,
Chief they recal her constant, filial love,
And pray her future lot may peaceful prove,
And they may meet her in the courts above !

Meanwhile the morning’s scene of festive flow
Is once more acted in the realms below !

Gay toasts are drunk—uproarious speeches made,
And thanks returned, with ludicrous parade,
As half-drunk waiters, maids, and footmen gay
Keep *their* Repotia on the wedding-day !*

Alas ! too much these creatures of the stall,
Lords of the steward's room, and servants' hall,
Upon their master's kindness presume,
And more than all their arrogance assume !
Idle, as worthless,—insolent, as mean,
The London footman lives but to be seen,
His merit in his inches—and we know,
The worse the weed—the taller it will grow !
Behold him leering, with familiar eye
From open door, at every passer-by,
And with a free, and supercilious stare,
Daring to criticise the blushing Fair !
See him with Morning Post—in porter's hall,
Conning the names at opera or ball—
Or in the lower regions—fittest place !
With others of his pampered, worthless race,

* Repotia was a Festival kept by the Romans the day after the wedding, to consume whatever good things remained after the feast.

Drinking, or playing cards with relish keen,
And venting impious oaths, and jests obscene !

Bred in some hole—with hardly food to eat,
Where scarce was known the taste of wholesome meat,
Now nought to please his palate he can find,
He must have strength and flavor, both combined !
And though he grumbles, still he'll gormandise
Till 'Hold ! enough !' o'erburdened nature cries !—
He can't be stinted ! five huge meals a day,
He must insist on—or he will not stay !
No matter what he wastes ! *it is* but waste !
And does him credit as a man of taste !
What cares he for the poor ?—the starving poor ?—
Nought—but to drive them from his master's door !
Each needy wretch, though decent, he'll discern
As dogs by instinct on a beggar turn,
And many a scowl, and harsh abusive word
Shall bar their entrance to his gentler lord !
Yet may they be more honest than himself,
For though he dare not steal his lordship's pelf,
He'll take its value, and without a thought,
Or one remorseful pang, *unless he's caught*,

Will steal all earthly things that can be sold,
And take—not gold—but what will turn to gold !

But shall we dwell on servitude—and fail
To paint that worst of plagues—the *Abigail*?
Decked in the cast-off clothes her lady wore,
Which now she mends—though she destroyed before,
Useless as fine—and whimsical as vain,
Ready to give her very soul for gain—
One from whose tongue all bitterest venom flows,
Erring herself—yet pitiless to those,
Whose faults, far lighter than her own, she knows—
Spending in vulgar gossip, half the day,
About what others do, and think, and say !
The other half in visits, novels, dress,
Scandal, and meals, or else in idleness—
Peering in corners where she should not peer—
List'ning to words she ne'er was meant to hear—
Making a key-hole of her willing ear—
To those above her, cringing, servile, mean,
To those beneath, a would-be tyrant queen !
With not one virtue—not one grace, unless
Skill to adorn the hair, or fit the dress—

}

}

Ready to give up place, and all beside,
For some mean crochet that affects her pride,
Then striving by deceit, the cause to hide— }
Such is too oft the lady's maid—and such,
The grovelling nature that we trust too much !
What wonder, then, that vile reports are rife,
And slanders, that occasion bitterest strife ?
If to such vipers we *will* madly cling,
How can we marvel that they turn and sting ?

Alas ! 'tis all too true, the menial race
In these degenerate days—is mean, and base !
But yet not all !—some instances we see
Of upright worth, and rare fidelity,
And trusting faith and fondness—that should prove
(With shame to us,) how simple hearts *can* love !

One such I know—a being, gentle—kind—
Who serves with constant zeal, and earnest mind
A suffering mistress ;—and would seem to live
For one sole aim—that she may solace give !
Dull are her hours in that secluded home !
Tedious her duties—worse than tedious some !

But all such toil she seems with joy to bear,
For well she loves the object of her care,
And every joy and sorrow cannot choose, but share ! }
Homely her features—yet not void of grace,
Sweet the expression of her pensive face,
Tender, though calm—and hopeful, though resigned,
The surest index of a pious mind !
Humble her lot—and yet this world of strife,
Can shew no pattern purer than her life !
Quiet her pleasures—yet to few are given
Such perfect peace—such trusting hopes of Heaven !

Nor doth this gentle instance stand alone !
Many as bright and beauteous have I known,
That shame me to recal ! for ah ! how few
Among *us* do, what these poor menials do !
And when we curse their tribe, and still condemn
The race as vile and worthless—not to them
Should be ascribed the obloquy and shame,
'Tis rather we, who should endure the blame !
For who amongst us seeks their final good ?
Or does one half to aid them that he could ?

E'en the example that too oft we set,
Tends but to make them more degenerate yet !
They err—perhaps scarce knowing good from ill,
We—knowing both, persist in erring still, }
Then surely more than they, we brave th' Almighty will !

Ah ! may we strive with greater worth to live,
And to our menials brighter lessons give !
Far more than precept, can example teach,
And shame should make us practise what we preach !

But turn we now, to a more gladsome strain,
For Christmas comes—and pleasures in its train !
Thrice happy Christmas ! with its festive mirth,
Its heavenly message—‘ Peace, good-will to earth ! ’
Blest be the welcome season !—blest to all
Its glad event—its glorious festival !
Nor rich, nor poor, at this bright time should mourn !
For all alike, the Saviour Child was born !
And though some hearts be sad—some eyes be dim,
Yet shall He comfort all who come to Him,
And at His bidding, inward strife shall cease
As once the storm he stay'd—and all was peace.

Lo! now the day is come—the wish'd for day,
And all this Christian land shines bright and gay !
Around Belgravia's thousand homes, the voice
Of joy and health is heard—and bids rejoice !
From heart to heart, the kindly wish is sped!
The rich are merry—and the poor are fed!
The toiling artisan can thankful share
The general rest—and eat his Christmas fare !
The smoke-dried shopman to the country hies,
And revels in the sight of clear blue skies !
The weary clerk, who scribbles all the year
Can take the pen from his enduring ear,
And banquet on the bird, by whose grey wing
He earns the pittance that the feast can bring !
The pallid usher, worn with ceaseless noise,
And freed at length from fifty graceless boys,
His aged mother seeks, and by her side,
Forgets his wretched lot—his injured pride—
Looks with a hopeful eye to better things,
And feels the grateful peace that Christmas brings.
Each jocund school-boy to his home departs,
To be received by longing, loving hearts,

To sport and feast at will—and as he can,
Ride, dine, skate, dance—and be in all a man.
The statesman, wearied with a nation's cares,
For this one day that nation's quiet shares ;
Casts off the onerous weight of public life,
And smiles his own old smile upon his wife ;
Watches with quiet joy, his children's play,
And in these hours of peace, rejoices more than they.

Nor is the female world less full of glee !
The moping governess at last is free ;
And from the school-room, where with patient mind
She daily drudges—‘ cabin'd—cribbed—confined,’
Comes forth—unwonted smiles upon her face,
And in the railroad takes a first-class place !
To London hies—and there with cherished friends
A joyous Christmas—gay with pleasures, spends !
Dances the old year out—and new year in,
And like her betters, seeks fond hearts to win !
Hails blest Vacuna’s* short but welcome reign,
Counts every hour of those that yet remain, }

And dreads return to plodding life again ! }

* The Goddess of Vacations. Her Festival was in December.

Meanwhile her pupils, wild with youthful glee
Like her, enjoy the sweets of liberty,
Revel in games—charades—and endless fun,
And do much mischief—leaving *tasks undone!*
Lament like her, the hours' too swift career
And wish that Christmas lasted all the year—
The sempstress—pale with toil and scanty fare
Creeps forth to revel in the ambient air !
Glad—for this day hath brought its wonted treat,
One rare for her—a taste of wholesome meat !—
The cloak-room damsel, who with well-built shape,
Fits on all day the mantle, shawl, and cape,
Surveying in the glass with flippant stare,
First her own form, and then the whispering Fair ;—
Rude to the set her practised eye deems poor,
Cringing to those whose purse is full and sure—
E'en she at length is free—and can to-day,
Her figure to the outward world display—
Can don her own smart shawl—the shop forget,—
And spend her hours with some convivial set—
The ancient spinster, who in country town
Has one small tenement she calls her own—
Boasts now a guest—her favorite brother, come
To spend his Christmas in her humble home !

Together they discourse of bygone years,
Their buried parents—former hopes and fears ;
Each past event, each ancient joy and pain,
Till as they talk, their youth returns again,
And they forget how soon the mouldering stone
That bears those honored names, must bear their own.

Thus all are happy !—On this happiest day,
Sorrow and toil alike seem scared away—
And a short respite from distress and fear,
Marks this bright period of the Christian's year.

But hark ! . . . methinks upon the whispering gale !
I hear a solemn sound—a mournful wail !
Like plaintive music on a marriage day,
Or funeral knell, when all the world is gay !
Alas ! 'tis even so !—One fair and bright
On this blest day, hath vanished from our sight ;
And not a heart, but mourns her sudden doom,
Thus early summoned in youth's fairest bloom !
Yet—yet ! I hear a voice that seems to say, *
Mourn not for her—that she hath passed away,

Leaving earth's scenes, for those immortal skies,
Where late she fixed her earnest, longing eyes !
For her the world was faded—pale the flowers—
And dull the scene, in mirth's convivial hours !—
Like a caged bird, she panted to be free,
The joys of time for her had ceased to be,
Her thoughts were fixed on immortality !

And lo !—upon the air there seems to come
Distant and faint—a murmur from the home
Where late she died—a tender parting knell,
Soft, sighing sounds of fondness and farewell !

1.

Farewell ! we lay thee in the tomb !
Our beautiful !—our own !
But not amid despair and gloom
We leave thee there alone !
Thy form—that charmed our outward sight,
Shall rest beneath the sod ;
Thy soul hath winged its glorious flight
Above—to meet thy God !

2.

Ah! happy thou!—and early blest!
For thee no tears should flow!
Thou hast thy wish!—the quiet rest,
Thy spirit longed to know!
We would not bring thee back again
To chase our selfish tears!
Nor rob thee of thy glorious gain,
For all our earthly years.

3.

And yet—so fair a thing as thou,
This world hath rarely seen;
So radiant was thy queenly brow,
Thine aspect so serene!—
'Twas not the beauty of thy face
That charmed—although so fair—
But some enchanting, nameless grace,
That seemed to linger there!

4.

The light of high and heavenly thought
Around thee seemed to shine,

As though thine earnest soul had caught
A glimpse of things divine !
And in thy dark and lustrous eyes,
A rapt expression dwelt,
As though their glance had pierced the skies,
And seen what Angels felt !

5.

Thrice happy spirit !—Dost thou know
The anguish thou hast left ?
Can'st thou look down on aught below,
And feel for those bereft ?
Thy father's grief—thy sister's tears
Do these thy pity move ?
And hers, who cherished thee for years,
With all a mother's love ?

6.

We cannot tell !—Unseen the Bourne
To which thy soul hath fled !
We know that there is no return—
That thou to us art—*Dead !*

But all beyond, is hid!—the skies
Except to faith—are dim!
Unseen their glorious mysteries,
Their bright-eyed seraphim!

7.

Nor should we seek to fathom more,
When light enough is given,
To point us to that radiant shore,
Where shines the promised Heaven!
Then whilst we weep—ah! still we'll pray
To meet, beloved, again,
Through Him, who on this glorious day,
Was born—nor born in vain!

8.

Farewell!—The flowers shall spring once more
Above thy quiet tomb,
The coming year shall soon restore
Their loveliness and bloom!
But thou! the fairest, sweetest flower,
No more shalt spring on earth,

Thy place is gone in grove or bower,
And by the lonely hearth !

9.

But yet—the memories of years
Shall never be forgot,
Still—still—we'll water with our tears
This silent—sacred spot !
And if thy soul *may* hover round
Where once it used to dwell,
Still shall it hear the self-same sound
Of sad and fond farewell.

.

'Tis gone !—'tis ended !—like the murmuring breeze
That waved but now the tall and leafless trees,
Then died away !—so this sweet solemn strain
Rose on my ear—and then was hushed again !—
Back from the glorious Future !—haste we back
To this dull, chilling scene—life's beaten track !
Alas ! the weary road must still be trod
And happiest they, who, whilst they quiet plod,

Choosing the 'narrow way,' through dust and mire,
Yet to clear depths, and azure skies aspire !

Now comes, with noiseless step and gentle airs*
The opening year—that in its bosom bears
We know not what, of strange vicissitude,
Many a dread event, and welcome good !
Hail to its coming ! . . . Hail ! the new-born guest !
Bringing fresh toil to some—to others rest !
To many, anguish—bitterest want—and fear,
To some, the dawn of a celestial year !
Ah ! had our mortal sight th' angelic power,
To look beyond the present changeful hour,
Oft from the view, our shrinking eyes would turn,
Grieved to behold, what we had longed to learn !
More it befits our dark, uncertain state,
To live from hour to hour—to watch and wait—
Nor shun the shafts of sorrow, when they come
Bringing their message from our heavenly home,
Warning of love—that tells in accents clear,
Not here our rest—nor should our hearts be here !

* The early part of this year was singularly mild and even warm.

Now with the opening year, and lengthening days,
More and more thronged, become the city's ways !
The greedy householder, who pines for gain,
Whom neither fear nor conscience can restrain,
Rubs up his crazy furniture—and views
In fancy whiskered Counts as rich as Jews,
Swarming by dozens, to his shabby door,
Ready to give all he can ask—and more!—
The spinster, in her well-cleaned lodging, shews
Th' attractive bill—and unattractive nose,
Resolved—since let she must—to let right dear,
And make a harvest of this wond'rous year—
The shopman hopes to gain a golden mine
From the poor parlour where his children dine
They must not murmur!—or at least, not loud!
But to the fireless attic, weeping, crowd!
What matter how they live—or what endure
If but the *ass's lading* they secure!
Ah! to a proverb, Philip's* words might pass!—
Well do they hit our grasping London mass,
Who never yet have closed *their* doors against the Ass.

* It was a maxim of Philip, King of Macedon, that no fortress was impregnable, into which an ass might enter, laden with gold.

But thou, Belgravia ! . . . thou, thy schemes unfold !
Wilt thou thy beauteous mansions let for gold ?
Desert thy halls—thy Lares desecrate,
And leave thy hearths to foreigners and fate ?
Alas ! for thee ! Thy situation low,
I fear hath made thy moral feelings so,
Or thou thy squares and streets would'st sure restrain,
From letting homes like thine, for sordid gain !
No fortress thou, impregnable !—and though
Thy bars refuse all *loads* a passage through,
Yet shall *one* load find entrance to thy fold,
Which like young love, no bar can hinder—*gold* !

For me—across the threshold of my home,
Nor whiskered youth—nor stranger Count—shall come !
I in my castle watch will keep—nor ope
To Priest nor Prince—to burthened ass—nor Pope !

Much do we need to guard our favored Isle
From many a foreign plot, and popish wile !
But from *within* yet more our peril comes,
Within our fold—our church—our very homes !

Would we could rest in what sound judgment deems
Wholesome reform—nor seek undue extremes !
Reform our churchmen needed—ere the rage
For *forms* began—in this our later age,
But now *that* rage has waxed so fierce and warm
That most of all, the *forms* require reform !
When reckless priests to God's own temple came
Half drunk, perhaps—and *all* devoid of shame !
In sporting, splashed attire, profanely dressed,
To don the surplice with indecent jest—
When they believed their duties well fulfilled
If from the pulpit they some truths instilled,
And once a week ran o'er, with careless tone,
The prayers that comfort gave,—when they were done !—
When others left their wandering flocks a prey
To stranger shepherds, watchful more than they, }
Who to their sheep-folds eager led the way—
When to the sacred feast on altar laid,
Solemn memorial of the ransom paid,
For lost and fallen man—not many came—
And chief of those—the hungry, old, and lame !—
Yet to the wealthier, no rebuke was given,
No earnest call to penitence and Heaven !—

Although the pastor's voice perhaps was heard,
Angry and threatening, when he missed a bird—
When christening rites—among the rich and great,
Were oft performed in *private* pomp and state,
And rank and wealth, a license could command
To join in gay saloon, by Hymen's band,
The high-born pair;—whose pride could not descend
In God's own church—before his flock—to bend!—
When boundless latitude of creed prevailed,
Which greater still, in outward forms,—entailed—
And erring man maintained his freeborn right
To choose his Faith, and way, by reason's light—
When things, in short, most sacred and most high,
Were either scorned—or passed unheeded by!
And though *some* priests with pious zeal were warmed,
They not the rule, but the exception formed—
When so corrupt a state the Church had reached,
What marvel that *reform* was sought and preached?

Then came 'a certain party'—and assailed,
These wrongs with weapons, which ere long preaviled!
Talent, and learning, and all ancient lore
Were on their side—and pious zeal still more!

None to their Church were subject more than they,
None more devoted, chose the narrow way,
And in the Christian's fight, none holier won the day ! }

Then through the land—our pastors 'gan to feel
A higher charge—a more inspiring zeal !
With tender care, their flocks to guard they strove,
And felt a shepherd's fears—a shepherd's love !
More fervour in the things of God was shown,
And reverence grew, where reverence was unknown !
The bright examples of remoter days,
When early Christians walked in heavenly ways,
Were oft recalled,—and pastors strove to tread
The self-same paths, in which these saints had led !
Hailed were these pure reforms—and well for us,
Well for our Church, had she continued thus !
Alas ! the rage for ever-varying change,
Led to extremes both perilous and strange !
Forms were enforced, till almost grown a sin,
And Popish errors soon came creeping in !
The Church ! the Church !—became th' Almighty word,
The Church !—and not our Bible !—not our Lord !

The Church's fiat must be all supreme !
The Church infallible, mankind must deem !
The Church's Pastors must God's Book explain,
Without *the Church*—to read it were in vain,
The Church men's alms must give—*the Church* prevail
Against the world—all power within her pale !
The Church must choose her Pastors—nor abide
That other judgment should their worth decide !
No other head *the Church* can deign to own,
Our Queen she brooks not—nor respects her Crown—
In short—*the Church*, that cannot change nor err,
Would seem to hold that we should worship *her* !

And yet—one thing *the Church* forgets—the peace—
The love, that in her fold should never cease !
Party contention—zeal—unholy fire
Her flocks divide—her Ministers inspire !
Disputes concerning customs—used of yore
And points of doctrine—oft discussed before !—
Eternal feuds respecting posture—place—
And which the Priest should turn—his back, or face ?
Forms obsolete—and senseless to revive,
Serving to teach no mortal how to *live* !

Crossings and bowings, that to vulgar eyes,
Seem all akin to 'Popish Mummeries'—
These—these—the soul must clog—confine her wings,
And keep her bound to sublunary things,
Whilst with contemptuous scorn she looks on such,
As deem she trusts to outward forms too much !

Yet is the Spirit of diviner birth,
Than the dead letter—and of higher worth!
Of what avail our turning towards the East,
If proud self-righteousness inflate our breast ?
And when we daily seek the House of Prayer,
What gain we?—if we learn not meekness there ?
Better the Altar should dispense with light,
Than raise a scandal—or still worse—a fight !
Without such aid—our worship many a year
Was well performed—our way—our duty clear !
Why then for lighted tapers, tumults raise,
And set both town and country in a blaze ?

For thee, Belgravia! . . All thy peace is fled !
Strife and confusion dwell with thee instead !

Mistaken zeal thy Pastors have inspired,
And brands of discord, in their Churches fired !
A war of words is waged 'twixt friend and friend,
And taunts put forth, no Pastor should have penned !
Against *the Church ! the Church !*—thy party cry,
The mob have raised their own—*No Popery !*
And if to furious deeds, their zeal should reach,
Be the blame *theirs*, who Popish errors teach !
Who—whilst they vow none Romans less than they,
Still, back to Rome, lead step by step, the way,
And—though the *Church's* laws they ceaseless urge,
Conduct their flocks to her extremest verge,
To sink engulphed in superstition's surge ! }
}

And yet devout these men !—like Saul of old !
Spending for God their labour, time, and gold !
Ready their blood to shed—nor think it shame,
All things to suffer in *the Church's* name !
Alas ! that error should such virtues mar !
Mistaken zeal, conduct such men too far !
Lead them—instead of peace—to seek for storms
And cherish *love*, far less than outward forms !

Strange!—that some recent acts should fail to ope
All eyes, to that gigantic snare, the Pope!
That those who saw in Rome no cause for fear,
Should *now* not read her aim—her purpose clear?
ENGLAND INDEED HATH SPOKEN! . . . and her tone
Mighty and firm—her steadfast mind hath shown!
Freedom to all *she* gives!—but none shall dare
To question hers—nor place one shackle there!
Peasant or Prince—each dweller on her sod,
May, as his conscience leads him—worship God!
But *she* will brook no foreign power's command,
None but her *Queen* shall dictate in *her* land!
And that same cause, which fired her saints of old,
Which bound her martyrs in one sacred fold,
She to the death, will cherish and uphold! }

Now full of earnest thought, and anxious care,
For the approaching session some prepare,
Others expectant wait—and pine to know
That which a few short weeks to all must show!—
Those envied men—the rulers of the State
From seaside—park—and castle—congregate!

Prepare their weapons—count the varied field,
Nor dread the strife, though fate should bid them yield !

Meantime Belgravia's mansions, one by one
Their windows open to the struggling sun !
Shutters—that long obscured the doubtful light,
Now disappear—nor grieve the passer's sight,
Whilst curtains, that in holland bags repos'd
The winter through—peep forth, but half exposed !
And in the halls, where silence late has been,
Gay sounds are heard—and powdered heads are seen !
Halls—that unlike each Atrium* of old,
Where all might toiling industry behold,
Here—are the scene of pampered sleep, nor less
Of gossip vain—and strenuous idleness !

Now full of joy, the bright Belgravian Fair
For coming fêtes and gaieties prepare !
Nor long suspense shall cheat their cherished hope ;
Soon shall a well-known Queen of Fashion ope

* The hall, where the Roman women generally sat,—that all might be
witnesses of their domestic industry.

Her distant halls—where with unequalled grace
She reigns—the goddess of that fairy place !
Brilliant the crowds that hasten at her call !
Wondrous the power that she exerts o'er all !
Lending a charm to every trifling word,
And winning hearts, that wait upon her lord
Beauty,—and rank—and talents high and rare,
All that is first and fairest—greet her there,
And when the London world is sunk in gloom,
Bright still that scene—and gay each glittering room !—
Then long may she her brilliant favors grant !
With fêtes political the world enchant,
Whilst still her lord displays his wondrous powers,
The dread of other lands—and pride of ours !

Now round Belgravia's walls, the noise and strife
Speak more and more of bustling, busy life !
The eager shopman decks each massive pane,
Hoping a prosp'rous year, and plenteous gain !
The stream of Knightsbridge, that with mighty force,
Drives all before it, in its headlong course,

Faster and thicker rolls,—whilst thundering down
Hundreds of *Busses* scour the trembling town!—
But free from such is lordly Belgrave Square!
Nought that is rude nor mean, may venture there
In lofty grandeur, do its mansions raise
Their shining fronts, that on the garden gaze!
No cheering prospect in the opening year!
Leafless the trees, and damp the walls appear,
Whilst over all the mists hang cold and drear! }
Ah! how unlike the scene in smiling May,
Or June's clear days—when joyous children play
Those trees among—and fair Belgravians walk
With dangling key—and spend the hours in talk!
Or in the fiercer heats of bright July,
When clear and cloudless, shines the azure sky,
And glancing gayly through each opening glade,
Fair groups are seen—reposing in the shade!
Whilst round with noiseless step, the gardener stalks
Guarding with jealous eye, his favorite walks,
And cherished plants, from all the canine brood,
And not the less from those invaders rude,
The *youthful* scions of the neighbourhood. }

Now busy Sloane Street wears a cheerful face,
And less demure than wont, Cadogan Place!
For not this year each proud Belgravian Square
To scorn their humbler attributes shall dare !
Grown vain at length—they in their turn look down
With saucy pride on all the neighbouring town !
The Square of Eaton—theme of discord dire,
Has cleansed at last its fearful road from mire !
And where a gulf impassable was found,
Clear now the way, and firm the level ground—
Among the stately halls of Eaton Place,
Some show a bill—some boast a whitewashed face !
The quiet nook that bears the name of Hans,
(Where the lone pump beside the garden stands)
All snugly smiles—its tiny homes invite,
Where cherished plants obscure the parlour's light !
Plants—which whilst vital gases they consume,
Noxious, though fair—curtail the narrow room,
Yet still are prized—as something sweet that tells
Of country homes—melodious village bells,
And all the fragrant loveliness, in rural scenes that
dwells ! }

But can I speak of flowers and shrubs—and yet
Catleugh's—that place of choicest sweets, forgot ?
Too well—too well I know that loved resort
Of fair ones, who at ball and concert sport
Bouquets, that oft adorn the glittering court ! }
Too well I know th' unceasing noise and din
Without those doors—th' eternal crowds within !
The piles of 'garden produce'—heaped around !
The countless baskets—strewn, upon the ground !
The strife of tongues—the hurrying to and fro
Of busy feet—that enter but to go !
From the slim cookmaid—who with basket comes
To buy her cabbage, or a dozen plums,
To the fine lady, in her gay barouche,
Who scarcely deigns the greenhouse floor to touch,
As round from plant to plant she mincing goes,
Choosing geraniums here—and there a rose,
For her Belgravian mansion's favorite room,
Glittering with wealth, and breathing soft perfume !
Not long in that gay scene their bloom shall last,
Soon shall their sweet, but fragile life be past,
Like some fair girl, whose rosy cheek hath grown
Altered and pale, in this luxurious town !

Who, worn with fashion's toils, and senseless hours,
Pines for her country home, and rural bowers !
And, if no fostering care her form revive,
Nor native breeze, returning vigour give, }

Soon must incline her head—and cease to live !

Ah flowers ! sweet flowers ! a type ye *are* of Man !
Bright in your beauty—transient in your span !
Fresh in your sunny morning ! . . . ere the night
Perhaps destroyed by some mysterious blight !
Or nipt by frost or storm, till day by day,
Ye fade and wither in your slow decay.
Just such man's life !—in youth's triumphant morn,
What hopes !—what beauties do his path adorn !
Ambition !—honour !—fame !—allure him on,
And still he follows—till the day is gone :
Then—when the height he sought, perchance is gained,
And his worn feet the summit have attained,
He turns—to catch once more the sun's bright ray,
Whose cheering light beguiled him on his way ;
The scene has lost its fairy bloom—and all
The earth seems shrouded in one common pall !

Then—like the flower, he fades—the joys of earth
Sink in his sight—as things of little worth;
And, as a trav'ler, who beholds his home,
And feels that dearer doth its view become,
So—within sight of that sweet rest, his eyes
Close to the scene—and like the flower—he dies! . . .

Yes!—though the way be steep—the journey long,
Yet it shall close at last—like this my song!—
Tis time indeed to check the muse's strain,
And bid her seek the silent shades again,
Lest some harsh Pindar* of our modern days
Should rudely shorten—then condemn her lays!
Alas! her feeble numbers boast of nought
But simple truths—unstudied and untaught! }
Not Theon's† dangerous powers by her are sought;
Not Cinna's‡ time—nor sparkling Sappho's fire }
Assist her verse—nor modulate her lyre, }
Nor yet to aught of praise, can strains like hers aspire! }

* Pindar boasted that he had taught his Contemporary Bards to shorten their descriptions.

† Theon was a Grecian Poet, so remarkable for the severity and acrimony of his writings, that his name gave rise to a Proverb—"Dens Theoninus."

‡ Cinna was *nine* years composing his Poem called "Smyrna."

Enough for her—if she pursue her way,
Tranquil and harmless, as her modest lay !
Seeking not fame—content to rest unknown,
Within the shades of fair Belgravia's town !
Scared by no savage critic's direful breath,
Who with a sentence far more harsh than death*
Crushes with giant force the Muse's powers,
And turns to horror all her sweetest hours.

Farewell! then! favourite theme!—Perchance ere long
Thy name again shall mingle in my song !
Fitful and sad—my wandering strain may raise
Memories for ever prized, of cherished days !
Of loved ones erst Belgravia knew—and some
Not less beloved—who owned a distant home,
Whom, rarely seen—yet in my heart I bore,
Trusting to meet them on that radiant shore,
Where death shall part—and sorrow grieve no more ! }
Ah ! that sweet hope hath power to bear me on,
Through all distress—e'en when the loved are gone,

* Les Decemvirs, qui formoient une Aristocratie, punirent-ils de mort les écrits satiriques.—*De l'Esprit des Lois.*

And never more fond word, nor mute caress
Can speak to them of deathless tenderness !
Yes ! . . . they may droop and wither like the flowers,
But they shall live again in heavenly bowers
And when I watch their gradual—slow decay,
And mourn to see them pass from earth away,
Still on that cherished hope my heart shall dwell,
Still sound—scarce sadly—their departed knell
And murmur soft and low—as now I sing . . . Farewell !

THE END.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY G. PHIPPS, RANELAGH STREET, EATON SQUARE.

And never more shall now I mention this to others
I am not so foolish to wish to speak of such a
view of all self-righteousness which I have
tried to shew in this little sketch of mine
which will be lasting to all time. I must speak
of this most execrable sort of human life
which has made you good-battered traitor like
Lord Scamper right—whose son—hence little
Flower of F... ergo I won an—well I am not unmindful but